Dr. WILLIAMS's
LAST SERMON
AT
Mr. BOYLE's Lecture,
1695.

ADVERTISEMENT.

HAVING now finished the Course of Sermons for the Year 1695. Those of the Present Year belonging to the same Argument, will (God willing) be speedily Published in their Order, *viz. Concerning the Rule of Scripture*, and *The Way of Interpretation.*

The Perfection of the Evangelical Revelation.

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. *Martins in the Fields*, Nov. 4. 1695.

BEING THE

Eighth and Laſt of the LECTURE

For that YEAR,

Founded by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, Eſquire.

By *JOHN WILLIAMS*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

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UMI

A

HEB. I. 1, 2.

God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners ſpake in time paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, &c.

IN which words (as I have ſhewed) there is.

1. A Deſcription of Revelation, 'tis God's *ſpeaking*.

2. The Certainty of ſuch a Revelation, God *ſpake*, 'tis taken for granted.

3. The Order obſerved in it, it was *at ſundry times*.

4. The Perfection and Completion of all; God *hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son*.

Under the Third,

(1.) I Have conſidered the ſeveral ways by which God did reveal himſelf, as Inſpiration, &c.

(2.) Have ſhewed the difference between Divine Inſpirations, and Diabolical Illuſions, and Natural Impreſſions.

(3.) I am now to conſider the ſeveral periods before the Law, under the Law, and under the Goſpel, and the gradual progreſs of Revelation from firſt to laſt, from the lower to the higher degree, and the perpetual reſpect one had to the other.

(4.) I am to conſider, why God did thus gradually and *at ſundry times* proceed in revealing his Will to Mankind; and why he did not at the firſt communicate his Will to them as fully and perfectly, as he did in *the laſt daies by his Son.*

And then I am to conclude with the laſt General, *viz.*

4. General; Where I am to ſhew the Perfection of the Goſpel Revelation, and that there is not to be any other Revelation till the end of the World.

I have here a large Field before me; and many difficult Points to treat of; but becauſe this is the Concluding-Lecture of the Year, I ſhall ſum it up, and paſs through the Particulars with as much brevity as the time will allow, and with as much attention as I can; though I muſt

I muſt fall ſhort of what the Subject and Nature of the things to be ſpoken of doth deſerve, and might otherwiſe, be treated of.

(3.) I am now come to the Third Branch, and to conſider the ſeveral Periods, *viz.* the Patriarchal before the Law, the *Moſaical* under the Law, and the Evangelical under the Goſpel.

The Patriarchal State, is that which extended from *Adam* to the Deliverance of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, and the giving the Law at Mount *Sinai*, which included in it the ſpace of Two thouſand five hundred Years, and upward.

The *Moſaical* or Legal State, was that which extended from the delivery of the Law at *Sinai*, to the preaching of *John the Baptiſt*, with whom ended the *time paſt*, and the *laſt daies* began; which included in it the ſpace of One thouſand four hundred Years, and upward.

The Evangelical State, is that which began with *John the Baptiſt*, and is to continue to the Worlds end.

In the conſideration of theſe three States, we may obſerve, That there is a great difference between them, and a gradual aſcent from the leſs perfect to the greater; ſo that the *Moſaical* is ſuperior to the Patriarchal, and the Evangelical to the *Moſaical*. When

When I ſpeak of the Patriarchal, I intend to give it all the advantage, by looking upon it as a State of Revelation, and not a bare State of Nature; for I have before proved, that there was a Revelation from the beginning, and derived down by a conſtant Pedigree and Succeſſion, more or leſs. But what it was, we muſt in great part rather conjecture, than can certainly know; eſpecially as to the *Antediluvian* State. For the Flood having ſwept away the whole Stock of the ungodly *Camites*, it was the deſign of Providence that their *Memorial ſhould periſh with them*: And ſo the Divine Penman contracted that State, and gives us only a Breviat of what paſſed before the Flood.

We have there the Hiſtory of the Creation, Fall, and Recovery of Man; and may obſerve how ſeaſonably Almighty God interpoſed for his Comfort and Relief, by the promiſe of *the Seed of the Woman.* We may obſerve further, how for the maintaining of his Authority, and the manifeſtation of his Juſtice and Holineſs, and to imprint on the minds of Men a dread of offending for the future, and to keep up an expectation of the Son of God's appearing and becoming a Sacrifice in our Nature, God eſtabliſhed from the very firſt a courſe of Sacrifices; by

by the means of which Atonement Sinners might have a right Notion of Almighty God: when his Juſtice and Mercy were thus intermingled; that they might not be encouraged to preſume on one hand, nor be thrown into deſpair on the other.

We may obſerve farther, how God provided for the preſervation of Religion, and eſpecially Revelation, by the Longævity of the Patriarchs, and a Race of Holy Men, who were Prophets and Teſtifiers of his Will; of whom there was a conſtant Succeſſion; that by a long Converſation between Father and Son, Progenitors and Succeſſors, what was wanting in Records and Memorials, might be ſupplied.

We may obſerve farther, how ineffectual this courſe proved in the Iſſue, how degenerate Mankind grew, ſo inflexible and incorrigible, that to purge out this peſt of Impiety that had infected the whole Race, God took up a reſolution of diſcharging the World of that impious Stock, and to raiſe up a new Seed from the Righteous *Noah*; and that iſſued in the Flood.

This is the ſhort Hiſtory of the firſt Sixteen hundred fifty ſix years of the World, the Antediluvian State.

The Revelation, ſo far as it is handed down to us in *Moſes*, was then obſcure; But a Revelation they had, and Prophets, and thoſe of the higher Form: Inſomuch, that ſome of the *Jews* hold, that *Enoch*, in particular, was endued with a higher degree of Prophecy than *Moſes* and *Elias*.

But whatever it was, the ſum amounted to this, That God was reconciled to man after his Apoſtacy; that he had eſtabliſhed an Atonement; and that in proceſs of time the Son of God ſhould in our Nature actually appear, and become a Saviour to us, and be a Propitiation for our Sins.

But there is a farther branch of this Patriarchal State, which is the Poſt-Diluvian, after the Deluge.

Here we are in part in the dark as before; for there were no leſs than Three hundred ſixty ſeven years, at the leaſt, paſt (for ſo long it was from the Flood to *Abraham's* departure out of *Haran*) of which the Inſpired Hiſtorian gives little account. All that we have, is the progeny of the Sons of *Noah*, and their diſperſion, and the diviſion of Tongues upon the fooliſh attempt at *Babel*.

The

The reaſon of this ſeems to be much the ſame as before the Flood; and that was the general depravation of Mankind, of which the ſaid attempt at *Babel* was an Inſtance; and the Call of *Abraham* out of the Land of the *Chaldees* an Evidence.

For the reaſon of that Call of his, was the Idolatry then growing upon the World; the infection of which, it ſeems, the Family of *Sem* had not altogether eſcaped: For this the Anceſtors of *Abraham* are charged with, *Joſh.* 24. 2, 14. And then it was in him that pure Religion began to lift up its head again; and for that reaſon that he might become an eminent Inſtrument for preſerving and promoting it, God revealed himſelf to that Holy Patriarch.

And this is the Third Branch of the Patriarchal Period, which I may call the *Abraamical* State.

The firſt Revelation of this was (as aforeſaid) to *Adam*, which was, that it ſhould be *the Seed of the woman*, (whom the Serpent had ſeduced, and thought to have brought his ends about by). The next opening of this great ſecret of Divine Wiſdom was, that this Seed, or *Meſſias*, ſhould deſcend from the Stock of *Abraham*, viz. *In thee ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed*, Gen. 12. 3.

which the Apoſtle applies to Chriſt, *Gal.* 3. 16. and to which *Abraham* had a reſpect in the Birth of *Iſaac*, when he gave him that Name, which ſignifies laughter, or rejoycing, *Gen.* 21. 3. Thus our Saviour interprets it in that alluſion, *Your father Abraham rejoyced to ſee my day, and was glad*, John 8. 56.

This was the reaſon why *Moſes* did ſo carefully draw down the Pedigree of *Sem*, which terminated in *Abraham*; paſſing ſlightly by the Hiſtory of his Progenitors, and taking up that of this Patriarch, in whom the Holy Seed did more illuſtriouſly appear: And why alſo he ſo punctually ſet down the time when this promiſe to *Abraham* was firſt made, and which as the principal of all, God did ſeveral times repeat to him, and alſo to *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, at the firſt time he is ſaid to have appeared to them.

Gen. 18. 18.
22. 18.
Gen. 26. 4.
28. 14.

So that though they had a ſtanding Oracle, and had other Revelations, yet this of the holy Seed was the chief Revelation, and which was upon all ſolemn occaſions renewed.

Gen. 25. 22, 23.

But though Revelation did eminently conduce to the good of the world, where it was promulged and received, and afforded a much brighter and more certain light than Nature and Reaſon of it ſelf did; yet even here Revelation

lation made, as it were, a pauſe, and the Patriarchal State gave way to another which we call,

2. The *Moſaical*, which had a manifold advantage of the other.

As

(1.) That Religion here was National, and the People were entire and embodied into one Society; whereas it was otherwiſe among the Patriarchs, as in the caſe of *Terah* in *Meſopotamia*; *Melchiſedec*, and even *Abraham*, in *Canaan*; and *Job* in *Arabia*; where Religion and the Church was rather Domeſtical than National.

(2.) The State of the *Jews* was a Theocracy, and the whole of it, whether as to matters Civil or Divine, was eſtabliſhed by God's peculiar appointment, and under whoſe immediate Regiment they were; having his Miniſter *Moſes* their Mediator, *Gal.* 3. 19. and God making them his peculiar and propriety, *Deut.* 4. 33. 14. 2.

(3.) It was a typical State, under which one of greater excellency, and thereafter in proceſs of time to ſucceed, was adumbrated, I mean, the Evangelical: So that their Rites, and particularly their Sacrifices under that Diſpenſation, had a peculiar reſpect to the great Sacrifice, *the lamb* ſaid to be *ſlain* (in God's Decree, and in

the

the vertue of it) *from the foundation of the world*: And which thoſe Rites and Sacrifices were intended for the farther ratification, and for the preſervation of in their minds.

(4.) I may add, there was an improvement made upon this Legal and Typical State, by the Prophetical; which was enobled by the many illuſtrious Prophecies, more eſpecially concerning the Meſſiah, as to the time of his Appearance, his Birth, and the Place of it, his Family, Sufferings, Miracles, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, in abundance of circumſtances relating thereunto. And when in the declenſion of the *Jewiſh* State, Prophecy might be expected ſhould decay with it, it on the contrary increas'd, till on the ſudden it wholly ceas'd, when the Revelation of that kind, and for that ſeaſon, was ſufficient: For what could have been more punctual than what was already Revealed?

(5.) After this there was a long interval of above Four hundred years, and a ceſſation of that Prophecy and extraordinary Revelation which had continued in that Church for the ſpace of above a Thouſand years, from the time of *Moſes* to that of *Zechary* and *Malachi*; at the cloſe of which it had been foretold, that by the coming of the Meſſiah, Prophecy and Revelation

tion ſhould revive, and a more plentiful effuſion of the Holy Spirit ſhould then be, than had been ever before. Now what ſhould be the reaſon of this, but that there might be raiſed in that People the more earneſt deſire after the approaching of that happy Age; and that they might thereby be convinced that their own Inſtitution was not to continue for ever, and that there was a more perfect Diſpenſation which they were to expect, and which was to riſe, as it were, out of the aſhes of the other.

And that is

3. The Evangelical State, which is the cloſe and completion of all; in which the Rites of the Law were completed, the Types anſwered by the Anti-Types, and the Prophecies were fulfilled and interpreted by the Event. So that the New Teſtament is the evidence and proof of the Old; the one declaring what is to come, and the other ſhewing that it is come; both bearing an exact correſpondence to each other.

I proceed to the Fourth Branch of the Third General; where

4. I am to conſider why God did thus gradually and *at ſundry times* proceed in Revealing his Will to Mankind, and why he did not at the firſt communicate his Will to them as fully and

and perfectly, as he did *in the laſt days by his Son?*

So that there are Two Queſtions to be reſolved.

Q. 1. Why God did not communicate his Will *at firſt?*

Q. 2. Why in *theſe laſt days?*

A. (1.) As to the former; it may as well be asked, Why God did ever promiſe? And why he did not actually give at the ſame time when he promiſed?

It may again be as well asked, Why there was ſuch a thing as Prophecy, and that the things Prophecied of were not at the ſame inſtant accompliſhed, as they were predicted?

And if that be the queſtion; it may again as well be asked, Why there is ſuch a thing as Succeſſion? Why there are Cauſes and Effects? And why all things are not Exiſtent at once? And why all Acts are not done together? For Promiſes and Prophecies imply Succeſſion; and to require there ſhould be no Promiſes and no Prophecies, is, in effect, to require there ſhould be no Succeſſion.

(2.) A Promiſe on God's part, implies the certainty of the thing in its ſeaſon, as well as a Prophecy. A Prophecy is certain becauſe of God's

God's infinite Power, Wiſdom, and Knowledge, to foreſee what will be the effect of ſuch Cauſes, what the events of ſuch Actions, or how he will order and accompliſh them: And a Promiſe implies beſides that, his Faithfulneſs, and that he will infallibly ſee to the accompliſhment of it. And ſo whatever is Promiſed or Prophecied of by Almighty God, is as certain in its Cauſes, and ſhall be in the Event, as if it was now in being or now done, or that we had it in actual poſſeſſion.

(3.) It is as much, if not more, for the Honour of Almighty God, that there ſhould be a Succeſſion of Beings, Actions, and Events, as if they were all Exiſtent at once; and conſequently as much to order ſuch Beings, Actions, and Events in Succeſſion, as it is if they were preſent.

(4.) As there are in Nature a Firſt and a Second, and ſo on in progreſſion; and all things appearing in their proper time, order, and courſe, till by degrees 'tis raiſed to its higheſt Perfection: So it is as accountable for God to make known his Will to Mankind, to begin and carry it on, from a leſſer to a higher degree, as he ſees fit; and upon a ſtrict examination has as much Beauty and Order in it. And to have all

Revelation at once, would appear as irregular as for all Mankind to have lived and died all at once.

(5.) Eſpecially is this, where ſuch Revelations are ſuited to the ſtate of the World, and that the Diſpenſation of one Age would not ſuit the Temper and Circumſtances of another; of which we have an inſtance in the *Jews*, who were of that Temper, that a burdenſome and Ritual Religion was more fit for them than another more Refined and Spiritual, and whoſe External and Gorgeous Form was accommodated accordingly to it, *as under age*, Gal. 4. 1. And therefore it is wiſely obſerved by *Theodoret*, Heret. Fab. l. 5. c. 11. οὐμμέτρα παῖς ἡλικίας προσφέρει παιδεύματα ὁ Θεὸς; *That God ſuited his Inſtructions to every Age of the World.* And we have good reaſon to believe this to be ſo, becauſe there was ſuch a gradual progreſs in Divine Revelation, as has been already ſhewn.

(6.) This is ſtill the more accountable, if we conſider that the Obligation of Mankind ariſes from the Notification of the Divine Will; and that according as the Revelation of it is, ſo is the Obligation. And therefore thoſe that have no Revelation, are not upon the ſame ſtrict terms with thoſe that have; nor are thoſe that live

live under the lower Diſpenſation, upon the ſame terms with thoſe that have the higher: So the Apoſtle St. *Peter*, *Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons; but every one that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him.* Acts 10. 34.

But this in part belongs to the next Queſtion.

Q. 2. From hence we may be able in part to reſolve the other branch of the Queſtion, *viz.* Why God did not at the firſt ſend his Son to deliver his Will to the world, as he did *in the laſt days*?

Celſus, a great Adverſary to the Chriſtian Religion, from the conſideration of Chriſt's coming ſo late into the world for the Redemption of Mankind, compares God to *Jupiter* in the Comedy, ὥσπερ ἐκ τῆς μείζονος ὕπνου διϋπνίσας, *as waking out of a long ſleep.* Origen. contr. Celſ. l. 6.

But this may as well be objected againſt any ſpecial act of Divine Providence; and were there no other anſwer to be given, this were ſufficient. But as there were many Prophecies concerning this ſtate of things to be accompliſhed by the coming of Meſſiah, ſo we ſhall find ſufficient reaſon for the Juſtification of Divine Providence in laying this Scene ſo remote from the firſt Ages of the world.

For

1. By this means we ſee what a wonderful Concatenation there is in the Divine Operations, and how in an orderly courſe all Events ſucceed according to his determinate Will, and what he has foretold. For there is a Hiſtory, as it were, of our Saviour before his Appearance; and by the Deſcription and Characters given of him in Scripture for Four thouſand years together, we may be able to prove, that he is the Meſſiah.

2. It doth not ſeem that the world was prepared for it before. For if Chriſt had been Born and Died as ſoon as *Adam* had Sinned, there would not have been among Mankind the ſenſe of their Condition, and of the need they ſtood in of a Redeemer, and of the Goodneſs of God in providing one for them; nor of the Neceſſity of the Divine Power to reſcue them, if they had not had a long experience of the ineffectualneſs of any other courſe or means for it.

3. We are to conſider, that the benefit of Chriſt's Death, looked backward as well as forward, and took place from the firſt publication of the Promiſe.

For

(1.) Immediately after the Fall, God did promiſe, That *the ſeed of the woman* ſhould *bruiſe* the

the Serpent's head; and this being a Promiſe made to *Adam*, he himſelf muſt conſequently have the benefit of it: For what advantage or comfort could it have been to him, that Four thouſand years after there ſhould be a Deſcendent from him that ſhould become a Saviour to them that were at that time in being, and that ſhould then and afterward believe on him?

(2.) We are to conſider, that this Promiſe gave *Adam* as much a title to the benefit of ſuch an atonement, and was to him as ſtable a ground of comfort, as if it had at the ſame time been actually executed; or as it could be to any that lived in or after the time that this atonement was offered, and the promiſe in all reſpects punctually made good.

Hence we read in St. *Paul*, of *the grace that was in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began*, πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, of ancient times, 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. *But is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour*; and that not in decree only, but in fact; ſo the ſame Apoſtle uſes the phraſe, *the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye, promiſed*, πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, *before the world began*; it's a promiſe made in time, and which he there diſtinguiſhes from the manifeſtation of it. So the *Goſpel was preached before to Abraham*, Gal. 3. 8. and who in the Faith of it, *rejoyced* Tit. 1. 2, 3.

joyced and was glad, John 8. 56. This is implied *Heb.* 9. 25, 26. *Then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world*; which implies that all ſin, ſince the foundation of the world, was forgiven with reſpect to that Atonement. So that when there was a promiſe of ſuch a means for our Reconciliation to God, and in the vertue of which the Penitent might plead for pardon, it was equally as advantageous to them that believed *in him that was to come*, from the firſt publication of that Promiſe, as if they had then had a plenary poſſeſſion: So that Chriſt might be well ſaid to be *the lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. 13. 8.

4. I may ſay, in all appearance there was not a more proper time for the coming of our Saviour into the world, and for all the Events depending upon it, than that in which he appeared.

And that if we conſider,

(1.) The general expectation of it, in conformity to ancient Prophecies. This was notorious among the *Jews*: So *Luke* 19. 11. *They thought the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear*; that is, the Kingdom of the Meſſiah.

So we find *Simeon* and *Anna*, and others, *waited for the conſolation of Iſrael*, Luke 2. 25, 38.

of

of which number was *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, Mark 15. 43.

Nay, this or ſomething like it, was got among the *Gentiles*: So *Tacitus*, the *Roman* Hiſtorian, *Many were perſwaded, that it was contained in the ancient Writings of the Prieſts, that at that time it ſhould come to paſs, That the* Eaſt *ſhould prevail, and that They ſhould proceed from* Judæa *who ſhould be Lords of all; which was a Prophecy of* Veſpatian *and* Titus. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 2. §. 8.

Suetonius another Hiſtorian, ſaith, *That it was an old and conſtant Opinion that had prevailed all over the* Eaſt: *This the Event*, ſaid he, *ſhewed to be meant of the* Roman *Emperor; but the* Jews *applying it to themſelves, Rebelled.*

This is agreeable to what is ſaid by *Joſephus*, the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, who ſaith, " That which ſtirred " up the *Jews*, and brought final Ruin upon them, " was the opinion they had from χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος, " ſome doubtful Prophecy in the Sacred Writings, " that at that very time there ſhould ariſe from " that Countrey one of themſelves that ſhould " Govern the whole World. Joſeph. de Bell. 7. κεφ. λα.

(2.) It was a proper time, becauſe as the world had all along the experience of the inability of all human means for reforming the Manners and Tempers of Men, ſo in that age more eſpecially,

especially, when the Wisdom of the world was in its height both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

When among the *Jews* they were at that time as averse to Idolatry, as ever their Ancestors had been inclined to it, and were in all the punctilio's of the Law as exact and scrupulous, as they were skilled in the Letter of it; and yet our Saviour found matter enough to condemn and chastise them for, and their practice was a fit Comment on that of the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 3. *What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.* So St. *Hierom* Comments upon it, *Now the time was fulfilled, when through evil custom no man could keep the Law.*

And if we turn our selves to the Heathens, Learning is acknowledged to have flourished in the time of *Augustus* beyond any Age; and yet that Age seemed to equal it self in Vice, not only as the Apostle describes it, *Rom.* 1. 29. but as it is confirmed by their own Historians: So St. *Augustin* describes it, *I am not the first that report it, but their own Authors; behold, before the coming of Christ, and after the destruction of* Carthage, *the manners of their Ancestors were neglected, not as before by little and little, but like a torrent by a strange precipitation; so much was the truth corrupted by luxury and avarice.*

De civ. dei l. 2. c. 19.

Now

Now when the world was thus corrupted under the beſt human means, What could be a fitter ſeaſon for our Saviour's Appearance? And therefore the Fathers, as *Origen* and *Tertullian*, triumph'd over the Philoſophers, and deſpis'd their artificial methods of Vertue, as too weak for ſo great and noble an undertaking.

3. It was a fit ſeaſon, as way was made for the propagation of the Goſpel by the diſperſion of the *Jews*, and the ſucceſs of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Arms.

(1.) By the diſperſion of the *Jews*, &c. For as their Law did ſerve to introduce the Goſpel, to which it had a Relation, and of which it was a proof; ſo by their diſperſion upon the Captivity (whence many of them never returned) and by other ſubſequent means, many of the prejudices which other Nations had againſt the *Jewiſh* Religion and Nation, were taken off.

And this was much furthered by the Tranſlation of the Old Teſtament into *Greek* (which was then the General Language). From whence I am apt to think, that the Opinion mentioned by the aboveſaid *Roman* Hiſtorians, did ariſe. *It was*, ſaith *Tacitus*, *in the ancient Writings of the Prieſts*: And indeed their *ex Judæa profecti qui re-* *Antiquis Sacerdotum literis.*

rum potirentur, out of Judæa should proceed those that should Rule the world, seems to be but the Latin of the Greek in Mic. 5. 2. ἐκ σοῦ ἐξελεύσεται ὁ ἡγούμενος, Out of thee shall come a Governor, as it is in Matth. 2. 6: or in the Septuagint, τοῦ εἶναι εἰς ἄρχοντα, that there should be a Ruler.

Ut invalesceret Oriens.

And *Tacitus*'s way of expressing it, that the East should prevail, is a manifest allusion to the same Translation, which renders the word, *Netzar*, the Branch (the Name ascribed to our Saviour in the Prophets) by Ἀνατολὴ, the East; so Jer. 23. 5. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, or the East; and a King, that King, shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. Now this Version having been in whole or in part, undertaken for the use, and at the request of Ptolomy Philadelphus King of Egypt, about Three hundred years before our Saviour, was in many hands; and so such a material part as those Prophecies could not be overlook'd. And indeed with these Prophecies there may be a good account given of those fore-cited places in the Roman Historians, but otherwise they are unintelligible, as appears by their application of them to Vespatian and his Son Titus, for want of understanding the true intent of them, and the respect they had to the Messiah.

V. Isai. 11. 1. Jer. 33. 15, 16. Zech. 6. 12. Luke 1. 78.

2. Ano-

(2.) Another means was the ſucceſs of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Arms; the former of which by *Alexander*, and the latter by *Pompey*, *Julius Cæſar*, and *Auguſtus*, had opened a way into moſt of the remote parts of the then known world; and by which means, and the civilizing the moſt barbarous People, there was a freer commerce and acceſs.

It muſt be confeſſed, That the Power of God can conquer all difficulties; and which we have an exemplification of in the Goſpel, where the *Barbarians* and *Scythians* felt the wonderful power and prevalency of it, as well as the ſofter and better diſpoſed *Greeks* and *Romans*: *The Word preached with Power overcame all human Nature*, ſaith *Origen*. Πᾶς γὰρ φύσιν ἀνθρώπων ὁ μὲν δαυάμεως λαληθεῖς λόγος κεκράτηκε. Contr. Celſ. l. 2. p. 68.

But God doth in the moſt extraordinary caſes, uſe ſometimes ordinary means; and eſpecially was this obſervable, that at that very time of our Saviour's Birth, the Gates of the Temple of *Janus* at *Rome* were ſhut, which were only in the time of an univerſal Peace; and which had happened but twice from the foundation of that City, till the Reign of *Auguſtus* (though twice before this in his Reign, as I remember).

And this was a very fit ſeaſon for the *Prince of peace* to appear in, and what in this ſence did verify the Angels Anthem at his Birth, *Luke* 2. 14. *On*

earth peace, good will amongſt, as well as *towards men.*

And ſo I am brought to the Evangelical State; where I am,

4th General, To ſhew the Perfection of the Goſpel Revelation, and that there is not to be any other Revelation to the end of the world; ſo it is here, *hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son*; which implies,

1. The cloſe and concluſion of all, it is *in the laſt days.*

2. The Perfection of the Goſpel Revelation, it is *by his Son.*

1. The cloſe of all, it is *in the laſt days.*

To which all former Ages had a relation, and in which, being *the laſt*, they were to be conſummated.

Here, ſetting aſide all ſubdiviſions of time; we may conſider the world, as to Revelation, under a twofold Period, *viz.* the Former and the Latter days.

Iſai. 2. 2. Mic. 4. 1. And ſo the Prophets ſpeak of *the laſt days*, as different from what both were before, or what were in their own time.

Now *in theſe laſt days*, there is a certain part of time circumſcribed, which in reaſon is to have ſuch characters belonging to it as it may be known by

by them when it was to commence, without which the *Epocha* was not to be determined. So that the first thing to be considered is, When these *last days* began, and what are the Characters by which that time is to be known?

And they are such as these.

(1.) The appearance of a Person, that from his spirit and temper, the Scripture calls *Elijah*, *Mal.* 3. 2. *and* 4. 5. who was to be the Forerunner of the *Messiah*, and to *prepare the way* for his reception.

(2.) The Restauration of the Spirit of Prophecy, which ceased among the *Jews* from the time of *Zechary* and *Malachi*, (as has been before observed) and was to be restored in *the last days*. *Joel* 2. 28. *Acts* 2. 16.

(3.) Many Impostors which were to appear, and who did not appear till about the time of the *last days*, according to our computation of them; so 1 *John* 2. 18. *It is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.* V. *Matth.* 24. 5, 24.

(4.) *The last days* were, when the Messiah himself did appear, *called the fulness of time*, Gal. 4. 4. and so it is express in the Text, *hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.* To which we may add the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, *Isa.* 2. 2. *and* 63. 1, &c.

From

From whence it is evident, that there is ſufficient ground for theſe two Periods, *viz.* the Former and the Latter days; and that the Latter began with our Saviour, and continue to the end of the world, whenſoever that ſhall happen: And therefore as it is called *the fulneſs of time*, becauſe it is the completion and conſummation of all; ſo it is called *the cloſe of the Ages*, (we tranſlate it *the end of the world*) or *the laſt days*, becauſe there were none to come after the expiration of this; and comprehends in it (as aforeſaid) all the ſpace of time from Chriſt's firſt, to his ſecond Appearance. *Heb.* 9. 26. *Acts* 1. 11.

Συντέλεια τῶν αἰώνων. Heb. 9. 26.

And ſo there can be no other time, and ſo no other Revelation; for as long as the *laſt days* hold, ſo long the preſent Revelation is to continue; and then there can no more be any other Revelation, than there can be *laſt days* beyond the laſt.

And this will be confirmed by the next Branch.

2. The Perfection of the Goſpel Revelation, included in that phraſe, God in theſe laſt days hath ſpoken to us *by his Son*.

'Tis but reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that ſince there has been a gradual Progreſſion in Revelation from time to time, and from a lower to a higher degree (as has been already proved) that the honour of all in the cloſe ſhould be reſerved for the Son of God;

God; to whom the Prophets were Harbingers, and the Angels themſelves Miniſters. This is the foundation of the Apoſtle's Argument, and the drift of his Diſcourſe, in this Chapter, beginning with the Text, *God who at ſundry times --- hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things --- being made ſo much better than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they: for unto which of the Angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son, &c.?*

Now as the Son is the laſt that appears, ſo beyond his there cannot be ſuppoſed to be any other Revelation, but that the Revelation muſt be like to himſelf, Perfect and Compleat; and ſo there can be no other Goſpel; and whoſoever pretends to another, falls under the *Anathema* of the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. *If any preach any other goſpel than ye have received, let him be accurſed.* For here it is;

1. That we find the great Prophecies fulfilled in the Meſſiah; whoſe Characters, though many, all center in our Saviour, as to Perſon, Time, Place, Qualifications, and Event.

2. In Him are all the Types fulfilled, and all the *good things* accompliſhed, which the Rites of the Law were the *ſhadow of*, Heb. 10. 1.

3. By Him is the moſt Perfect Revelation of the Will of God made known to the world, of all that God has promis'd and we may expect. 4. By

4. By Him have we the most Perfect Rule, the Highest Motives, most Noble Principles, and Glorious Rewards, and all things that conduce to the Perfection and Happiness of Mankind.

So that to any one that reads and compares those several Dispensations before spoken of together, as he must acknowledge there is this Gradation, so that the Christian Institution is for the Matter and the Evidence of it superior to all; and it will be as evident, that it can be exceeded by none.

For it is as perfect as can or need to be; for we cannot ascend higher in our Notions and Conceptions of things than we are there taught. We cannot exceed its Rules in our Practice, nor be defective in any necessary part of our Duty, if we advise with and observe it. Nor can we desire more excellent Encouragements and Rewards than are therein proposed, such as are Eternal. So that though the *Law of Nature, or of Moses made nothing perfect, yet the bringing in of a better hope* by the Gospel did. Heb. 7. 19.

And now we have nothing farther to expect, no more another Revelation than another Messiah; no more than another God to reward us, and another Heaven to reward us with.

And with this I am to conclude, having passed, by God's Assistance, through the several Heads I at first proposed in the beginning of this Lecture. The Argument is the most Noble Subject in Religion; what has been wanting in the Management of it, is to be ascribed to the Weakness and Imperfection of the Instrument: But if there has been any thing offer'd, which may tend to the farther Proof and Confirmation, the Illustration and Improvement of it; it is to be ascribed to God, who is *the giver of every good gift*.

From him must we wait for the Blessing and Success, and *To Him be all Honour and Glory*, &c. Finis.

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